

Ari – 18yo female from Wellington, first year VIC Uni student

What kinds of films do you like watching?

She liked Art House movies but will happily watch all movies. Has no immediate favourite genre.

What is the latest film you have seen that you really liked?

Black Panther was the last big movie she watched. She liked it as a Marvel movie but didn't like it as a normal movie.

Have you or your friends/family seen the 50 Shades film(s) before?

She had seen all three films. She had watched the most recent one, *Fifty Shades Freed* at the cinema. She saw the first *Fifty Shades* when she was 14. She re-watched this and also watched *Fifty Shades Darker* in the last week.

Did you like the film?

"I am going to say no"

"Such a forgettable movie"

"The plot is so wonky" --- She found it funny how disjointed the plot was and how badly the movie is written. She had not read the books but she said that she heard implausible lines like "Christian's eyebrows widened" and that made her not want to read them.

Why did you want to watch it?

"Just the talk about it" --- On social media and internet. "Lots of stuff on the internet about it" It was talked about/hyped so she sought it out on a pirate site.

Was the film/series/books talked about at school?

"We [one friend who had seen it] only talked about it at school the next day" --- Both girls watched it the same night to see what the hype was about and then talked about it.

Lots of people made fun of the movie for being so bad and unrealistic. "It was super dumb" (Recurring theme in consults that the film was watched to see what the hype was about, and now considered somewhat of a joke)

Did you talk about it with your family?

She talked about the film with her younger sister after watching it. Her sister had not seen it. --- "chat about it because it was funny"

How did you feel when you saw the film? Shocked? Bored? Curious? Wish you hadn't seen it? Nothing?

Did you like it?

She said she was unaffected at 14, as if the issues were so far removed from her own world that they didn't sink in at the time. She also mentioned *having to be OK with it* as if others were watching, she couldn't front up and say the film made her uncomfortable, even if it did.

She re-watched the first film at 18 and was surprised by what she missed when she was 14. "How was I not shocked?!... I was like 'whatever' when I was 14 but I am now far more aware of the content now that I am older...It was a lot more intense than I remember it...There was so much stuff I didn't realise or I didn't see as being weird at 14 which is really scary...[I] wasn't damaged but I easily could have been"

What did you think of Anastasia and Christian's relationship? (prompts: was it healthy? Realistic?)

"The most ridiculous thing ever"

"I found it weird that her friends [on the film] don't question their relationship. They don't react to him buying her a car" ---referenced the scene where her friend asks about the car keys and Anastasia says they are hers and then her friends change the topic.

"No relationship is like Anastasia and Christians. I would definitely call it abusive"

"Seriously toxic relationship"

"The whole movie is unrealistic"

"She [Anastasia] almost goes along with the mental control" ---- She was annoyed by the way Anastasia accepted a lot of Greys control and didn't question almost any of it.

"She [Anastasia] fakes that she is in control but she is not" ---- Referring to scenes where she Anastasia is seen saying no to things like "but stuff". She felt that the writers were trying to show that Anastasia had some control but it was a weak attempt.

She said she didn't pick up on the abusive relationship 'alarm bells' at age 14.

"It's abusive emotionally. Everything she does is critiqued and controlled"

What did you think about the sex scenes?

"[In the second movie Anastasia changed her position to] I want it now [BDSM]. This made the first movie redundant" (the fact that she left him after he strapped her hard at the end of film 1, then straight into film 2 she get back with Christina and wants to do BDSM).

Did you find the sex scenes very 'strong'? Or were they not so bad?

"What the hell" about the final strapping scene in the first movie. She thought that went too far.

"It's some of the most shocking". Compared to *Game of Thrones* as another example of strong sex scenes.

Do you know what BDSM is? Is it talked about at school or in sex ed? Have you seen this sort of stuff in films/TV shows before?

"I don't even know how I found out about it [BDSM]" --- She knew what BDSM was and didn't think she learnt about it because of the movie. Implied that you just hear and learn things from school and people around you. It wasn't referenced in sex-ed. Learned a lot online.

"80% of my sex-ed was through the internet" --- She said that this wasn't because her school didn't cover sex-ed well but she found things interesting and started looking up and noticing trends about consent etc.

She said that she would have had a similar reaction to sex-ed at school and watching the first movie at 14.

Did you notice the themes of consent and using protection?

"He makes her go on the pill. He makes her go to a doctor that he chooses" ---she didn't like how he made her do these things and it wasn't questioned.

"[The contract said] must go to the doctor of the dominants choosing"

"[When Anastasia came back from the doctors] It was just put in there [by the writers]" --- She said it was easy to miss how weird that situation was. Referring to the scene where Anastasia says that she can't have sex for three weeks. Christian reacts and Anastasia laughs saying that she is joking.

Unrealistic. Anastasia just does whatever Christian wants.

Classification and 'harms'

Do you think the film needs age-restricting? To what age?

"Um, I think so"

"how I was at 16 is so different to how I am now" ----She said even though she had no intense experiences over that period she still learnt and grew a lot in those two years which made it easier to see through the messages that were depicted.

"16yo high-school relationships are so different to adult ones." (she had a boyfriend at 16)

"I would leave the rating at 18"

She felt the film should be restricted to 18 less for the sexual content but the abusive relationship themes. By 18 "you know relationships like C&A aren't normal"

How might the depictions of sex be 'harmful' to younger people? (eg shock them, send unrealistic/ expectations about sex etc)

"Definitely".

"I already had my views on sex and relationships. It is the controlling aspect that is more impacting. The controlling elements is what needs to be restricted"

"Sets crazy expectations of what sex is going to be like" ---She compared the movie to porn and how they are both so unrealistic.

Damaging around attitudes toward gender dynamics. "[The message] How men can treat women, how women can treat women and how women think that men can treat women" ---She didn't like how this message was framed. Boundaries.

"There is no excuse for it [this kind of mental abuse], but the writers are desperately grasping why he does it" --- She didn't like the writers giving him a scapegoat. She said that people who may have similar pasts to him can't use it as an excuse to treat women that way. She also agreed that some people are interested in BDSM because that is just what they like.

"Boys will think this is what women want", "Anastasia wants to be controlled, no means yes" ---She didn't agree with how this would shape young boys minds

A danger that boys think women want to be dominated. Anastasia fights him but then submit. Like 'No means yes'. More damaging for boys to watch. Girls are often told sex isn't that great, that their first time won't be great and that it will hurt.

"Where have you been" --- referring to the scene where Christian finds out she is a virgin. She found this "ridiculous"

"Sex isn't that taboo, the relationship is the important thing to restrict on"

Problematic that the film presents BDSM as a result of someone's bad childhood. "People want to be in control of other people if their lives are out of control. Or no power = no responsibility for subs. That picture is unrealistic (of BDSM).

Or were there positive messages about sex and relationships that teenagers would understand?

"Sure, but the good can't outweigh the shit" ---She thought that the power dynamic in the relationship is too confronting compared to any positive messages about BDSM now being able to be talked about.

(depending on their answer) The film is currently R18. Is the sexual content too much for 16 year-olds or will they be able to handle it?

"I didn't even know it was R18"

"At 16 I understood a lot less"

"I am 18 now, even though I watched it 4 years ago I definitely see how the content would vary from my 16 year old interpretation".

"At 14 you want to think you're OK to watch it"

"Sex isn't that taboo anymore". There's porn and social media. at 14 I wasn't shocked but the abusive relationship is problematic and the reason to restrict.

When she talked about restrictions in general she said that between the ages of 16-18 they became annoying for when you genuinely wanted to see the film at the cinema, she brought up the movie *Gone Girl*. When she was younger they didn't seem as big of an issue.

General re YP consults

Why do you think it's important we talk to young people about film classification?

She said it was very important to involve young people. She talked about censor for a day and how much she valued being involved in something like that. She appreciated the relaxed tone of today's discussion.

Would you like to receive feedback on the decision that we come to?

She would like to be emailed the report and decision.

Mentioned cinema/DVD store age-restrictions preventing YP from seeing films but online they can watch whatever they want.

At 14 she didn't know the film was R18, didn't pay attention to rating.